

REMARKS

Applicants request examination of the elected subject matter on the merits. It is respectfully submitted that the new claims are directed to the subject matter of Group II. The new claims 13-30 find support in the specification throughout. For instance, Examples 1 and 2 on page 6, line 34 to page 7, line 37 describe the production of a genetic recombinant HCV antigen (*i.e.*, NS3 antigen) and synthesized HCV antigens (*i.e.*, core peptide, NS4 peptide, and NS5 peptide). On page 3, lines 19-23, the specification notes that the solid phase may be sensitized with one or more HCV antigens. Thus, the new claims are fully supported by the specification and introduce no new matter.

In the unlikely event that the transmittal letter is separated from this document and the Patent Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, Applicant petitions for any required relief including extensions of time and authorizes the Assistant Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to **Deposit Account No. 03-1952** referencing docket no. 322732000401. However, the Assistant Commissioner is not authorized to charge the cost of the issue fee to the Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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